1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

778
756 women resort for the cure of every ailment, physical or moral.

756 Is a child ailing, it is carried by its anxious mother
755 to the most eminent Sheikh within reach, who cures it by imposition, not of hands, but of feet, by breathing on it with his holy breath, or by hanging some sacred
[777] charm around its little neck. The first-named remedy may sound startling, but is actually applied, as I can vouch from personal observation.[1] The baby is laid on its back, and the Sheikh, laying his hands on the shoulders of two of his disciples who stand on either side, places his feet and rests his entire weight for a few seconds on the child's body. The Dervishes also
● 787 expound dreams, read the future, and furnish every other species of occult information of which their clients may stand in need.

776 Some Christian saints belonging to the Armenian calendar are also highly revered by the Kūrdish tribesmen. Of these perhaps Surp Serkís, or St. Sergius, is the one whose aid is most frequently sought. Kūrdish warriors, when about to enter on a campaign, resort
[781 to his tomb, and seek to enlist his favour and pro-
778] tection by there sacrificing a ram and lighting wax tapers.

776 The strange and widespread Oriental myth of Khidhr-Elias, in his double character of sea and land deity, is also current among the Kūrds, with whom he is Khidhr on land and Elias on the sea, and by whom he is invoked as a kind of guardian angel.

[1] I witnessed this strange practice at Salonica, after a service in the *tekkeh* of the Mevlevi, or "dancing" Dervishes, as they are commonly called by Europeans.

usage is recorded in this connection. If a man dies at 764
night or when it is raining, the body is carried immediately
to the mosque and left inside. The mullas read over it
throughout the night, and tea is offered visitors on the
porch of the building. The corpse-washer comes to the
mosque and carries out his tasks there. It might be
mentioned that ordinary burial is always performed on the
day of death. The grave is prepared by laborers prior
to the arrival of the procession, and is so oriented that
when the corpse is laid within on its right side, the face
will look in the general direction of Mecca, in Rowanduz
to the southwest. After the grave has been filled, the
relatives and friends of the deceased return home, and
refreshments are given to all callers. Gifts of food are
sent to the house by friends and neighbors. Another
interesting custom now appears. Three days after the 768
burial, a barber is called to cut the hair of the new [302]
head of the family of the deceased, if the latter has
occupied this position. The house itself is rarely aban-
doned, except in those cases, common in the Middle East,
in which some accident connected with the death, for [787]
example, one of the family getting blood on his hands,
leads people to believe that continued occupancy would
cause bad fortune.

There is no specific period of mourning, although 765
it is usually several months before normal life is resumed.
The men of the family wear no visible sign, but the women

each dwelling give them a small sum and pour a little water over the dolls. Another custom is to empty a basin of water on the ground after the departure of a traveler. [484] Browne noticed this as he was leaving Tehran:

> . . . as I mounted amidst many good wishes for my journey I heard the splash of water as it was thrown after me. What the origin of this curious ceremony may be I do not know, neither did I see it practiced on any other occasion.[1]

In Rowanduz, Tuesday is considered to be an unlucky day for any outstanding enterprise, such as a major business transaction or a wedding. As among many primitive groups, the parings of fingernails and hair from a comb are not to be thrown away. There is no belief that they might be used in black magic, but it is considered "best" to wrap them in a bit of paper or a rag and place the packet in a crevice. A tooth is also put in a hole of some sort in the wall of the house, "in order that no one will get a headache." [751] Dreams are, to some extent, considered to have prophetic significance. "An angel may come in a dream," it was said, "and point out the location of buried treasure." [776] Some of the other superstitions, for example, the significance attached to bread, have been noticed in previous sections.

In concluding this section, it is difficult, if not impossible, to assay the piety of the inhabitants of Rowanduz as a whole. There are many of the townspeople who do not say five prayers daily or fast during Ramadan, and a large number of the chieftains seem to take their faith

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[1]Browne, 1893, p. 174.

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

the door to the loggia he greeted her by reaching out the hand in question, which she kissed, laid it against her brow and passed it along both her cheeks. The name of the hand was not given me but it should be a reproduction of a "holy hand" in Baghdad.

Soothsaying. In addition to the production of amulets, traded for flour and sugar, the two sayyids had yet another thing for sale: their skill in soothsaying. Actually, this was the reason why they were allowed to tarry among the women of Sheikh Taifûr's house in Topzawa. When the two parties had come to terms, a greasy book, kept in a plastic case of the sacred green colour hanging from the waistband of the one, was taken out and opened. One of the women placed her hand on it and pointed to one of the pages. The younger of the two sayyids then gave his interpretation in a droning voice.

Fortune-telling of this kind with the Kurds is referred to by Nikitine[49], who says: "Les Kurdes aiment beaucoup dire la bonne aventure ("dêri"), et pour cela ils se servent d'un livre spécial en persane ... on l'ouvre à l'aveuglette, on regarde la sentence qui s'y trouve la première et on consulte l'indication que porte en haut chaque page ("bien" ou "mal") ...". A "prophecy" book of this type has been brought back from Afghanistan (E. 1275). In addition to this soothsaying with the help of a book opened at hazard, I also observed another form of fortune-telling. During my stay with the Sheikh at Sargalu, the house was visited by another wandering sayyid. Sitting on the floor, surrounded by women, he read their future by palmistry.

Visit to saints' graves. Kurdish women could visit saints' graves[50]. We visited a saint's grave outside Halabja. The saint's last resting place was in a small chapel where a grating cut off the grave itself and the carpet-hung superstructure from visitors. A basin with a spring, lying behind a wall outside the enclosure surrounding the chapel, allowed women to perform the ritual ablution necessary. One of the women that day was hindered on account of her menses (cf. p. 153) from entering the chapel and small plantation, which possessed a rag tree. Close to the saint's grave the women picked up small stones from the ground and attempted to make them stick to the wall at the side of the grating. It was said that if the stone remained sticking the wish one had would be granted, otherwise not.

Saints' graves were found in a part of a mosque in the mountain town of Tawella near to the Iranian frontier. The mosque there, described as a *xânaqa*[51], was apparently a Sufi religious house[52]. The superstructures over the saints' graves inside were like houses and were hung with silken rugs[53]. On the one was the turban of the deceased. A young girl kissed the turban[54] respectfully, and accepted some soil scraped together and handed her[55] by the *mulla* who accompanied us. Over that part of the building, the architecture of which evinced considerable Persian influence in the horseshoe arches, the saints' graves were housed under vaulted domes, each of which was surmounted by a hand with outstretched fingers.